

REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1, 2, 12 and 13 are amended. No new matter is being presented, and approval and entry of the amended claims are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, and 4-13 are pending and under consideration. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

In item 36 of the Action, the Examiner contends that the Amendment filed September 13, 2004 arguments fail to comply with 37 CFR 1.111(b) because "they amount to a general allegation that the claims define a patentable invention without specifically pointing out how the language of the claims patentably distinguishes them from the references." Applicants respectfully submit that in traversing the rejections the previous Amendment addressed specific recitations in the claims that were not taught by the cited art, alone or in combination, and pointed out example advantages that are achieved by the present invention in contrast to the cited art.

STATEMENT ON SUBSTANCE OF INTERVIEW

An in-person interview was conducted between the Applicants' representative and the Examiner on April 13, 2005. During the interview, the Applicants' representative pointed out features of present invention that patentably distinguish over the cited art, e.g., that a keyword is determined prior to recording the chat volume, and not a mere "utterance." The Examiner agreed with the same and indicated that claims reciting "associating and preparing specific keywords prior to recording a chat volume with specific keyword category". . . appears to overcome the prior art of record." (See, Interview Summary). Other arguments presented are included below.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the opportunity for an interview.

Claim Amendments

Independent claims 1, 2, 12, and 13 are amended as discussed during the interview to recite, using claim 1 as an example, associating and preparing specific keywords prior to recording a chat volume with specific keyword categories. No new matter is being presented, and approval and entry of the amended claims are respectfully requested.

ITEMS 5-13: REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1-2, 4 AND 12-13 UNDER 35 U.S.C. 103(A) AS BEING UNPATENTABLE OVER GRUEN (U.S. P. 6,393,460) IN VIEW OF SCIAMMARELLA (U.S. P. 6,564,244).

The Action concedes that Gruen does not teach "displaying a list of relevance point

tabulation associated with keyword categories." (Action at page 4). However, the Examiner rejects claims 1-2, 4 and 12-13 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gruen in view of Sciammarella.

Independent claims 1, 2, 12, and 13, using claim 1 as an example, recite a communication support method, a system, a computer-readable medium, and a transmission medium "associating and preparing specific keywords prior to recording a chat volume with specific keyword categories."

As the Examiner agreed during the in-person interview, Gruen does not teach this feature.

Rather, Gruen merely teaches (see, for example, col. 7, lines 1-7) classifying an "existing utterance into one of existing clusters/classes." That is, Gruen determines (col. 5 line 12 - col. 8 line 39) a characteristic of a chat based on a frequency of a weight of a word or phrase that is said "during" the chat. On the other hand, aspects of the present invention determine a characteristic of a chat based on a volume of a chat after the keyword is spoken.

For example, *arguendo* Gruen teaches that a word having a high frequency may be registered in a table and presented to a user, but a word with a low frequency would not be register regardless of subsequent conversation volume.

In contrast, according to an aspect of the present invention a high frequency keyword would not necessarily be registered if there is little chat volume regardless of the keyword's frequency. Also, a low frequency keyword can be considered to be a characteristic of a chat if the chat volume is substantial in a predetermined time period after the low frequency keyword is used.

That is, while the present invention is "active" with respect to "preparing specific keywords," Gruen is rather "reactive" and evaluating text, after-the-fact.

Further, the features recited regarding a --keyword-- are not taught by Gruen teachings regarding an "utterance." Applicants respectfully submit that as understood in the art the features in "preparing specific keywords. . . associating ... keywords" are not taught by evaluating an "utterance." (See, for example, Oxford English Dictionary (<http://www.askoxford.com>) that defines a keyword as "a word or concept of great significance . . . a significant word mentioned in an index . . . a word used in an information retrieval system to indicate the content of a document. In contrast, an "utterance" is defined merely as "something that someone says.")

Conclusion

Since features recited by independent claims 1, 2 and 12-13 (and dependent claim 4) are not taught by the cited art, alone or in combination, and *prima facie* obviousness is not established the rejection should be withdrawn and claims 1, 2, 4, and 12-13 should be allowed.

ITEM 14-17: REJECTION OF CLAIMS 5-11 UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a) AS UNPATENTABLE OVER COMBINATIONS OF GRUEN AND SCIAMMARELLA IN VIEW OF TROVATO (U.S.P. 6, 435, 012). BROWN (U.S.P. 5,941,947), BRADSHAW (U.S.P. 6,065,056), AND COTTRILLE (U.S.P. 6,076,100)

As claims 5-11 depend directly from independent claim 2, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 5-11 patentably distinguish over the cited art for at least the same reasons as independent claim 2, as set forth above. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 5-11 are also in condition for allowance.

Further, Applicant submits claims 5-11 distinguish over the cited art for features recited therein. For example, dependent claim 5 recites a system "wherein said communication support system is additionally provided with a channel entry time storage means for storing said entry time a chat device entered a virtual space for each virtual space; and said decision means calculates said virtual space characteristics based on said keyword categories sent by chat devices in accordance with said entry times said chat devices remain in said virtual spaces."

The Action concedes that Gruen and Sciammarella do not teach a "channel entry time storage means." (Action at page 7). However, the Examiner contends it is obvious to modify Gruen and Sciammarella with Trovato to "increase the likelihood of determining the characteristic of said virtual space." (Action at page 8).

Applicants submit that Gruen merely teaches informing users the subjects of different "ongoing" chats. That is, the chats are occurring at a common time, and there is no motivation to modify such Gruen's method with Trivatos' teaching of an "entry time."

As another example, dependent claim 6 recites a communication support system, "wherein said decision means acquires specific rights that a chat device has in regard to a virtual space from the chat system, and calculates said virtual space characteristics based on said keyword categories sent by said chat devices in accordance with the rights of said chat devices in said virtual spaces."

The Action concedes that Gruen and Sciammarella do not teach "acquiring the specific right of the chat device," however, the Examiner rejects claim 6 under 35 USC §103(a) as unpatentable over Gruen and Sciammarella in view of Brown to increase flexibility. (Action at

pages 8-9).

Applicants submit that there is no motivation to modify Gruen to acquire specific rights, as the Examiner contends. Rather, the objective of Gruen is to inform a user of subjects of ongoing chats, and there is no incentive to modify the code and programming involved to "achieve a variety of (untaught) objectives," as the Examiner contends. Further, there is no motivation to modify Gruen to "provide the ability to apply penalties to improper use." Such a modification of monitoring does not support Gruen's objective of quickly informing users of ongoing subjects (without a screening).

Conclusion

Since features recited by dependent claims 5-11 are not taught by cited art, alone or in combination, the rejection should be withdrawn and claims 5-11 allowed.

CONCLUSION

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

If there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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